



March — April 2006

## **WEMD begins new state grant program**

Formal application guidance for the new state Emergency Management and Preparedness Grants can be expected by mid-May on the Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD) website <emd.wa.gov>.

The grant application will be electronic, said Arel Solie, supervisor of EMD's homeland security section of the Programs Unit. "We will widely disseminate the announcement of the grant applications and will direct people to the EMD website."

The application timetable developed from an April 17 Tacoma meeting involving Jim Mullen, Emergency Management Division director; city and county emergency management directors; and key EMD staff.

"It's an opportunity," Mullen said of the grant program approved in a budget conference committee in the final days of the 2006 Legislature. The Legislature assigned \$1.6 million for the grants and \$400,000 to EMD to administer the grant program and to conduct studies of the creation of state disaster medical teams and urban search and rescue teams.

Mullen said he wanted EMD to design a grant application and



**A hazardous materials team checks out a suspicious car as part of the Tahoma Resilience Exercise April 4 in Pierce County. The bioterrorism exercise involved Pierce County agencies, the state Department of Health and the Washington Emergency Management Division. (Pierce County Photo)**

## **Federal rental payments continue for about 200 hurricane evacuees**

Federal rental payments will continue for about 200 Hurricane Katrina disaster aid registrants in Washington under Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) rules that start May 1, according to the Washington Emergency Management Division of the Washington Military Department.

"The new rules will end the emergency housing program funded by FEMA and administered by the state through local housing authorities," said Kurt Hardin, state coordinating officer for the Katrina disaster assistance program. "About 100 households will become ineligible at the end of May for further housing assistance financed by federal disaster programs."

"Overall, there were about 2,000 FEMA hurricane disaster registrations with Washington state addresses — representing about a total of about 5,000 to 6,000 persons. Many of these hurricane evacuees have been able to establish themselves in the state through the efforts of government, non-profit charitable organizations and family and friends. But a small percentage of hurricane evacuees in

# New state emergency management grant program

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review process “so everybody has a shot” at the grants which he said should be used to show a demonstrative improvement in local emergency management.

He also noted that Gov. Chris Gregoire had taken the unusual step to use her March 31 budget veto messages to direct the Military Department “to report to me on a regular basis concerning the uses of this funding and the specific improvements in emergency preparation that have been achieved through the grant process.”

Both local emergency managers and EMD staff pointed out that the grant performance period is tight. Solie said the grant funds are not available until July 1, 2006, and must be spent in one year. With the grant application and review process, she said local jurisdictions realistically will have only about nine to 10 months to complete their grant projects.

Solie added that grant process will focus on showing the value of the projects through “quantifiable deliverables.”

While several local managers emphasized the need for simplified application and reporting process for the grants, Solie said the grant reviewers will need enough information on the applications to make awards on an objective basis.

Stephanie Fritts, Pacific County emergency manager, said it would be essential to have a top limit or cap on individual grant awards so that the money could be spread to agencies throughout the state.

Steve Bailey, Pierce County emergency manager, and Jim Hall, Yakima County emergency manager, urged that the grant rules permit applications for new equipment or for improvements to emergency operations centers.

Mullen said he would like the grant program to fill gaps in emergency management programs and recommended local jurisdictions use the Emergency Management Council’s Local Task Force Report to help prepare strong applications.

He added that he would talk to legislators about the intent and function of the program and about the need for continued funding to sustain emergency management operations at all levels in the state.

In an overview of the legislative grant program, Maillian Uphaus, EMD program section manager, said the purpose of the program was to “enhance emergency management in Washington.”

The Legislature allocated \$400,000 to EMD to administer grants, train elected officials, carry out emergency management exercises, and to conduct studies of the formation of state

disaster medical teams and urban search and rescue teams.

Uphaus said EMD will focus on administering the grants and conducting elected official training in emergency management. She said the studies of state disaster medical teams and urban search and rescue teams will be conducted by outside contractors to achieve impartiality and technical expertise. These studies are to be completed by Dec. 1, 2006.

The \$1.6 million appropriation will establish competitive emergency management grants that are open to regional agencies, local governments, tribal governments, regional incident management teams and private organizations. These grants can fund:

- development and coordination of emergency plans.
- training of elected officials and appointed officials in disaster response.
- administration of joint emergency management training exercises.
- implementation of projects to strengthen emergency response, mitigation, preparation and coordination.

## 2-1-1 system is underway

After years of preparation and planning, 2-1-1 service became available in Washington state on Feb. 22, 2006. Two-one-one (211) access was initiated through four call centers serving 12 counties and 60 percent of the state's population.

In addition, the 2006 Legislature directed the Washington Military Department as the coordinating agency to manage the \$2.5 million appropriation assigned to 2-1-1 operations for state Fiscal Year 2007.

An easy-to-remember phone number, 2-1-1 connects people in need to available health and human services organizations. Service rollout to the rest of the state will continue throughout the year.

The Legislature established the Washington Information Network (WIN 211) last year to manage the installation of 2-1-1 dialing capabilities and with coordination of services to be provided through existing social services call centers across the state. This effort followed the national designation of 2-1-1 by the Federal Communications Commission as the nation's access point for health and human service programs.

The 2-1-1 service has been used extensively in regions where it is available to assist with relief coordination during last year's hurricane season. In Texas, more than 267,000 calls about relocation assistance



**Shoalwater Tribal Nation members review a Feb. 28 tsunami evacuation exercise with Washington Emergency Management Division staff members near Tokeland in Pacific County.**  
(EMD Photo)

## Federal rental payments continue

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Washington still face challenges such as medical conditions, affordable housing, and the lack of transportation and available jobs," Hardin said.

During the past eight months, the state has worked with local housing authorities to place 325 evacuees in interim disaster housing, and the state's clearinghouse handled several thousand calls to help evacuees with housing, deposit and utility funds, medical care, clothes, furniture, vehicles, identification papers, employment, recovery of vital documents and financial accounts, and funeral expenses.

"While more work remains to be done, the persistent efforts by the government agencies and private and non-profit organizations have enabled many of the evacuees to begin their recovery from the devastating losses of last year's hurricanes," Hardin said.

Hurricane evacuees will receive letters during the next month to explain their continued eligibility for federal disaster assistance and to outline their options for housing and for possible appeals of federal aid eligibility decisions, he said.

came to statewide 2-1-1 system during and immediately after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The state of Florida, the 2-1-1 system answered basic questions about where to find shelter or to get ice, sparing the

9-1-1 emergency system of thousands of calls. It is anticipated that WIN 211 will play a similar role in Washington state to assist with post-disaster health and human services program delivery.

# **NW states to form regional EMAC assistance team**

**By Dr. Terry Egan.**

**Member, EMAC Executive Task Force**

The states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Alaska have agreed to form a regional Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) A-Team that will train together to deploy to a state that has declared an emergency and to help that state access EMAC resources. The joint A-Team is one of the steps Northwest states are taking to prepare for what is forecasted to be another busy U.S. hurricane season in 2006.

Northwest states also are pre-identifying A-Team members and ensuring they are trained; reaching out to state agency counterparts and local responders to provide EMAC training and education; and conducting outreach with a variety of stakeholders.

EMAC is an interstate compact that includes 48 states, two territories and the District of Columbia. Washington State last year deployed 89 persons under EMAC to assist the states affected by Hurricanes Rita and Katrina. Washington National Guard leaders recently received training on the compact's operations, and Washington State cabinet officials will be briefed in the near future.

EMAC capabilities involving Northwest states will be tested in two May exercises: the Pacific Peril regional tsunami exercise in Oregon and the Evergreen Sentry transportation exercise in northwest Washington.

In March, four representatives Washington State attended the EMAC national after action review (AAR) for Hurricane Katrina. They were Maj. Gen. Timothy Lowenberg, Washington Military Department director; Jim Mullen, Emergency Management Division director; Ann Guerrero, from the state Department of Social and Health Services' Community Service Office in Moses Lake; and EMD Unit Manager Terry Egan, who also facilitated one of the review's work groups.

Nearly 150 people from a variety of disciplines participated in the national review, which brought together mutual aid stakeholders representing state and local emergency management, fire, law enforcement, public health, National Guard, animal resources, human services, public works, engineering, state and local elected officials, and federal agencies.

The disciplines separated into facilitated breakout groups for one day and then reported back to the full group on day two with their issues and recommendations for improvements to the interstate compact.

Participants also identified successes and best practices. The feedback from the diverse groups will be extremely valuable as EMAC seeks to improve its policies and procedures. This approach was also an opportunity for relationship building with public health and safety partners and further educating them on EMAC as a national response tool.

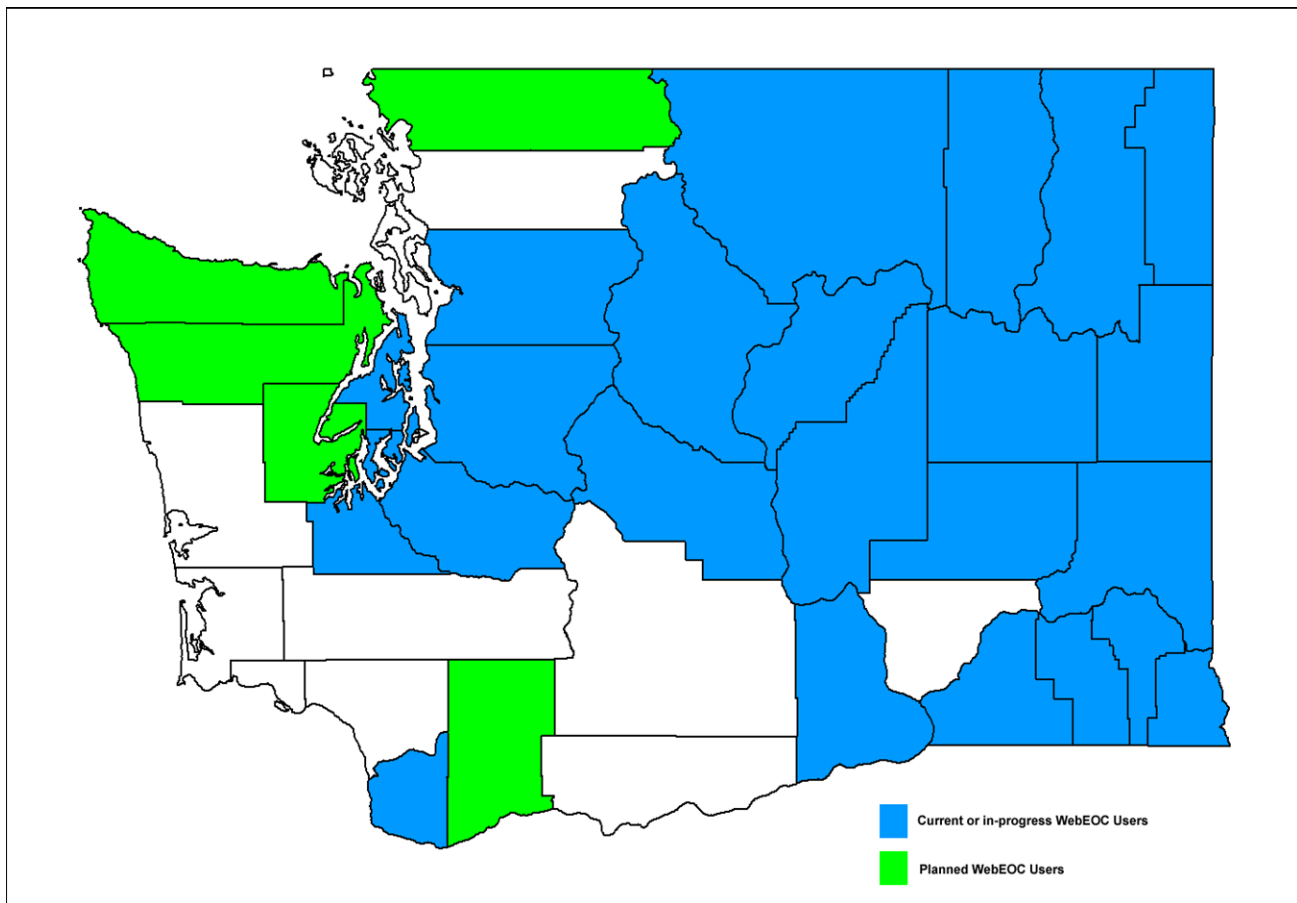
This EMAC after-action review was the third and final step in the overall review process for the Hurricane Katrina response. A draft of the recommendations is expected to be available this summer, with a final published report in early fall.

EMAC leadership is not waiting to begin to implement many of the recommendations identified throughout the AAR process. Many activities are already underway, and others are being planned. For example, the EMAC Executive Task Force is re-writing the Operations Manual and drafting mobilization checklists for state responders. EMAC training courses are being updated with the lessons learned from the 2005 hurricane response. During the 2005 Hurricane Season over 65,000 personnel were deployed under the Compact to the affected Gulf States. With experts forecasting another challenging hurricane season, it is appropriate that steps are being taken nationwide to improve mobilization readiness.

## **Commission renames freeway bridge near CP Murray**

A freeway bridge just outside of the main Camp Murray entrance has been renamed to "Freedom Bridge" in honor of Washington's Armed Forces. The State Transportation Commission approved the name April 19. The bridge, which has been decorated with yellow ribbons for the support of the military forces deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, crosses Interstate 5 between Camp Murray and Fort Lewis. "This bridge for decades through good times and bad, has been traversed by our military personnel," said State Sen. Mike Carrell, R-Lakewood. He said the bridge has been a focus of the community, and its new name would be "in memory of all the soldiers who have served."





## WebEOC program usage expands in Washington State

WebEOC program use is rapidly expanding in Washington State with many jurisdictions purchasing their own software and servers, while others are being hosted by the Emergency Management Division's (EMD) servers.

The development of common templates, status boards, user profiles and logs provides for a Common Operating Picture (COP) that has proven to be extremely beneficial during exercises and real disasters.

Those templates, whose number totals more than 120, cover incident command system forms, displays, significant events and shared logs. Many are special purpose forms with only one or two users while others are core templates that

are common to all users. Almost any template, display or form can be created and shared with all entities that are securely logged in during an event to produce that Common Operating Picture.

Currently, 28 counties are using or are planning to use WebEOC capabilities. Many cities have also adopted its use. In addition, all state agency liaisons use WebEOC when working in the state Emergency Operations Center (EOC), and many of their agencies have opted to access it, hosted by EMD, for their internal disaster operations.

EMD uses WebEOC to support its emergency center operations and to support those state agencies interested

in using WebEOC to sustain their own emergency management activities.

Those agencies that provide their own systems and software can "dual-commit" their systems to the EMD system so that each party can share selected templates, logs, displays and boards. Whether hosted by EMD or not, local jurisdictions select the information and boards that they feel should be shared with other local or state level WebEOC users.

EMD's Telecommunications and Warning Systems section provides this service for any emergency management agency in Washington without charge. Contact Don Miller, Andy Bohlander, or Dave Rider, 253-512-7000, for information.

## EMD develops new web-based EAS system

Under the auspices of a U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) pilot project, Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD) has developed a new system for originating and disseminating Emergency Alert System (EAS) messages.

The new system will utilize a web-based system that will generate a fully compatible EAS message in the new international Common Alerting Protocol format. The CAP format will allow all types of receiving devices, such as televisions, radios, pagers, sirens, and cell phones, to receive EAS messages.

Don Miller, supervisor of EMD's telecommunications section, said the new system utilizes a text-to-speech generator that will eliminate past EAS audio problems and allow for the scrolling of the actual alert text on television screens.

The system will permit the public to sign up for EAS alerts by ZIP code or county.

Because it is compatible with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Hazcollect project, the new system will enable alerts to be transmitted over the National Weather Service's weather radio network.

Miller said DHS will field the new EAS system in 12 East Coast states before the start of this year's hurricane season.

## Tsunami awareness campaign targets media, coastal residents

Washington Emergency Management (EMD) staff embarked on an intensive tsunami awareness campaign for media and coastal residents in April.

George Crawford, manager of EMD's earthquake program, helped lead a series of public meetings in Westport, Aberdeen and Ocean Shores during the first full week of April. The meetings included Tim Walsh, geologic hazards program manager for the state Department of Natural Resources; Brian Atwater, geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey; and Ted Buehner, warning meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Seattle.

Public meetings in Westport, Ocean Shores and Aberdeen highlighted the nature of tsunamis and the hazard that they pose for the Washington coast.

Walsh described how the Washington coast has a geologic condition that is similar to the Banda Aceh region of Indonesia where the 2004 earthquake and tsunami killed more than 100,000 persons.

He said Washington residents have a better chance of seeing a Cascadia subduction zone earthquake in their lifetime than dying of unnatural causes. The lifetime odds of dying in a car accident are one in 78, while the odds of seeing a Cascadia subduction zone tsunami are one in 6.5 to 7.

Rob Harper, EMD public information officer, and Buehner met individually with Seattle area media on April 20, to distribute new Tsunami Media Kits.

The kit is designed to help media when a tsunami becomes breaking news. The kit includes compact discs of tsunami pictures and video, a list of local subject matter expert contacts, tsunami fact sheets and maps of the coastal areas which could be inundated by possible tsunami waves.

The booklet and media outreach program, which also will be used by coastal county emergency managers, was prepared by the EMD at the direction of the State/Local Tsunami Working Group.

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Washington will be in line for the system by the end of summer, he said.

Additional information on the system can be found in a PowerPoint program located on

the EMD website at [www.emd.wa.gov](http://www.emd.wa.gov) or by calling-contacting Don Miller at (253) 512-7035 or [d.miller@emd.wa.gov](mailto:d.miller@emd.wa.gov)

## Two EMD staff members make presentations at SF conference

Two Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD) staff members made major presentations at the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Earthquake Conference commemorating the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. The five-day international conference ran from April 18-22.

George Crawford, EMD's earthquake and tsunami program manager, and Mark Stewart, EMD's hazard mitigation strategist, discussed how tsunami-ready communities can be established using public education, scientific data on past tsunami events, and state-of-the-art alert and warning systems. Their presentation highlighted work that has been done to improve tsunami readiness along the Washington coast.

Their April 18 tutorial session had more than 100 registrants including representatives of local, state and federal agencies; academic institutions from New Zealand, Hong Kong, Israel, Taiwan, Thailand, Japan and Mexico; several international communications, insurance, investment and research corporations; seven major U.S. public and private universities; and nine professional and scientific organizations including the American Society of Civil Engineers, the American Geophysical Union, and the Western States Seismic Policy Council.

Stewart also was part of an April 20 presentation on the three-year study that developed the 2005 report on the impact of a major Seattle Fault earthquake to the Central Puget Sound Region.

Crawford presented a conference paper on translating scientific information into usable emergency management products and will conduct a poster session about getting tsunami warning messages to the public. In addition, he was a co-author of a conference paper on constructing tsunami-resistant buildings.

"We are extremely honored to have two EMD program staff members who will make presentations to this very prestigious international conference," said Jim Mullen, EMD director. "Their work was selected from among a thousand academic research papers submitted for presentation at the conference. Their selection stands not only as a tribute to the caliber of their work but also to the importance of their findings to our state's tsunami and earthquake preparedness efforts."

## EMD staff appointments, changes

**Rob Harper**, EMD's public information officer, received a certificate of appreciation from Umatilla County, Ore., Emergency Management for his assistance as a member of the virtual Umatilla Joint Information Center Team during the EA-6B Prowler Jet Crash Emergency Response from Mar. 3-5, 2006.

**Colleen Baardson**, who has served as a State Emergency Operations Officer since 2001, retired from EMD on April 30.

## Amateur radio academy held

The 2006 Communications Academy training for amateur radio operators attracted an estimated 200 to 300 persons April 1-2 at the Criminal Justice Commission Training Center in Burien.

Washington Emergency Management Division (EMD) has sponsored and participated in the annual training event for the past 10 years.

Don Miller, supervisor of EMD's telecommunications section; Mario Badua, telecommunications coordinator; and Allan Josue, telecommunications planner; represented EMD at the weekend training.



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The Washington Emergency Management Division, including the State Emergency Operations Center, is located in Building 20 on Camp Murray, located at exit 122 on Interstate 5 south of Tacoma, Washington.